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UNCLAS HO CHI MINH CITY 001010

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

DEPARTMENT FOR EAP/BCLTV, DRL
BANGKOK PLEASE PASS TO DRL/IRF WILL INBODEN

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PHUM](#) [SOCI](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KIRF](#) [VM](#) [HUMANR](#) [RELFREE](#)

SUBJECT: STILL NO OFFICIAL DETENTION ORDERS FOR TOP UBCV MONKS

REF: A) HCMC 0993 B) HCMC 1000

¶11. (SBU) Continuing to work the few remaining telephones that haven't been cut off or rerouted, ConGen received confirmation today that Unified Buddhist Church of Vietnam (UBCV) Patriarch Thich Huyen Quang is in good condition at his pagoda, although he is being closely watched. While neither he nor UBCV Deputy Thich Quang Do are under written orders of administrative detention, they are nevertheless being "detained" and closely guarded at their pagodas in Binh Dinh Province and Ho Chi Minh City respectively.

¶12. (SBU) Speaking with ConGen over a landline from his Gia Lam Pagoda in HCMC's Go Vap District, UBCV General Secretary Thich Tue Sy said he had been able to reach Thich Huyen Quang earlier in the day. No one had been in contact with Thich Quang Do, however, and the doors of his Thanh Minh Zen Pagoda in Phu Nhuan District remained locked shut. Thich Tue Sy had also learned more about his own status since yesterday (ref A), noting that he now needed to request official permission for any travel outside the ward where Gia Lam is located. He believed he was free to receive visitors under the terms of his written administrative detention order. (Post note: Poloff will test that hypothesis over the next day or two.) He sounded very relaxed and confident over the telephone, saying, "monks aren't afraid."

¶13. (SBU) Providing additional information on the recent "illegal" meeting of the UBCV leadership in Binh Dinh and subsequent events, Thich Tue Sy noted that Thich Huyen Quang was now officially the 4th Patriarch of the UBCV. (The three prior patriarchs were all based in Hue and are now deceased.) Thich Quang Do now holds the position of President of the Institute for Dissemination of the Dharma, with Thich Tue Sy as Vice President. The three monks were "elected" to these positions at the recent general conference in Melbourne, according to Thich Tue Sy, but the decisions were made in Binh Dinh.

¶14. (SBU) After the initial incident during which they were prevented from leaving Binh Dinh for over eight hours on October 8 (ref B), Thich Tue Sy, Thich Huyen Quang, and Thich Quang Do had all proceeded in a van toward HCMC. They were accompanied by Thich Thanh Huyen (also from Gia Lam Pagoda), Thich Nguyen Ly (from Tu Hieu Pagoda in HCMC's District 8), Thich Vien Dinh (from Giac Hoa Pagoda in HCMC's Binh Thanh District), Thich Nguyen Vuong (the assistant of Thich Tue Sy), two assistants of Thich Huyen Quang, and two lay believers from Tu Hieu Pagoda. The group stayed at the Linh Son Pagoda in Khanh Hoa Province for the night and was stopped by police near Nha Trang the next morning. Thich Tue Sy said that he and Thich Thanh Huyen were taken back to HCMC by police on October 11, at 4:45 p.m. Thich Nguyen Vuong had not joined the group leaving Linh Son Pagoda and was never detained. The two believers from Nguyen Ly's pagoda were detained for two days and released, after which they promptly returned to Tu Hieu Pagoda.

¶15. (SBU) ConGen also spoke with Thich Vien Kien, an associate of Thich Vien Dinh, via a landline at Giac Hoa Pagoda. He said that police had escorted Thich Vien Dinh to his pagoda on October 11, at 7:00 p.m. Monks inside saw local police filming the pagoda from a distance before his arrival. Many plainclothes security officers remained just outside the premises today. While Thich Vien Dinh had not received any written administrative detention order, the Binh Thanh District police had told him vaguely he needed approval to "travel." They also told him to resign from his new position as Second Vice President of the Institute for the Dissemination of the Dharma. The police had advised him that he would be "invited" to the police station for questioning, but then visited him briefly October 15 to ask about his health and any special needs. According to Thich Vien Kien, Thich Vien Dinh is tired and a little disoriented from the ordeal, but otherwise healthy. He apparently responded to the police by saying that, "I am a monk and need nothing but to practice my religion."

¶16. (SBU) ConGen was unable to contact monks at four different pagodas in Hue, where UBCV monks have reportedly been under pressure from police since attending the "illegal" leadership meeting, with some telephones cut off and others just ringing or busy. Thich Tue Sy told ConGen that Thich Thien Hanh had already gone on hunger strike the last time they spoke on October 12. He

said the UBCV was working to get followers in the U.S. to contact relatives in the Hue area to have them go check on the situation.
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